

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
21 January, 1970

I. CONVENE, Room 7000, Interior Department Building

A Regular monthly meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts was held in its office in the Interior Department Building on January 21, 1970. The members met, pursuant to notice, in executive session at 10:00 a.m. with William Walton, Chairman, presiding.

Present were: William Walton
Gordon Bunshaft
Kevin Roche
Hideo Sasaki
Chloethiel Woodard Smith
John Walker

Staff: Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
Daniel D. Reiff

Reporter: Mrs. L.M. Vialpando

II. ADMINISTRATION

- a. Dates of next meetings were set for February 25th and March 18th.
- b. The minutes of the 19 November, 1969 meeting were approved.

c. The Secretary advised the members of a public hearing on the erection of an 1100 foot TV transmission tower on Connecticut Avenue and Van Ness Street, N.W. Members questioned the suitability of such a tower anywhere within the city of Washington, but decided to take no action pending the review of the actual design. This would have to be requested from the Office of the Mayor.

III. SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS

1. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

a. Federal Triangle, Completion of IRS, Retention of Old Post Office Tower, Grand Plaza and Parking Garage - Proposed Design

Plans for completion of the IRS building indicated that GSA was again proposing to retain the Old Post Office Tower. This decision was reached after opposition from the Planning Commission and the Landmarks Committee and also the Pennsylvania Avenue Commission. Members of the Commission reaffirmed their previous view that the tower should go. Plans for the parking garage and treatment of the Great Plaza were thought to be an improvement over the previous submission. No further discussion pending meeting with architect.

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b. Fogarty Health Center, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland

Revised designs appeared to lack the character found in the previous submission. The members were generally disappointed. No action pending a meeting with architects.

c. U.S. District Court House, Constitution Avenue between 3rd and 4th Street - Proposed Cooling Tower

A proposed cooling tower for the floor of the U.S. District Courthouse was approved provided the structure be on the center line of the building, that it be located back from the parapet as far as possible and that it be treated with limestone to blend with the building.

2. National Park Service

Feasibility Study, Visitor Parking Facilities and Pedestrian Bridge Crossing, Washington Channel, between 10th Street, N.W. and Aquarium Site

Members agreed that the information contained in the new feasibility study did nothing more than to reaffirm their previous doubts about the channel bridge -- too big, too commercial looking and most inadequate as a pedestrian approach to a major facility such as the Aquarium. A simple one story garage just north of the Aquarium would be a much more realistic solution for providing parking for visitors to the Aquarium. No further discussion pending meeting with consultants.

3. D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency

a. Waterfront Development, Maine Avenue, Southwest, Parking Facilities

It was pointed out that the underground parking garage proposed in the foregoing study conflicted with RLA's plans for parking along the southwest waterfront between Maine Avenue and Water Street, particularly in relation to the restaurant facilities. Members felt that RLA's scheme was feasible now that the elevated parking structures lining Maine Avenue would be replaced by sunken parking lots surrounded by low screen walls. The project was approved.

b. Columbia Plaza Office Building, 24th and E Streets, N.W. - Revised Design

The information was judged to be incomplete. A motion was approved to have the architect make a better presentation.

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4. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development

Shipstead-Luce Act

a. American Institute of Architects Headquarters Building,
New York Avenue and 18th Street, N.W. - Design Studies (S.L. 70-19)

The new design was thought to be far better than any of the previous solutions. It was simple, straightforward and relatively quiet. The one exception taken was the proposal to treat the "board room" as a strong sculptural element projecting out from the face of the building and providing a canopy for the entranceway. The members' reactions were not unanimous. Some felt that it helped the transition from the scale of the large office building to the scale of the Octagon while others felt it "gimmicky" and an overblown mannerism. It was left undecided to what extent this would affect the Commission's decision on approving or rejecting the design pending further discussion with the architects.

b. Corcoran Gallery, New York Avenue between 17th and 18th
Streets, Addition to West Wing - Proposed Site Development Plan S.L. 70-20

It was obvious that the proposed extension of the west wing of the Corcoran Gallery would clash with the designs for the United Nations Office Building on the site immediately to the west. Members recommended that the building not extend all the way to the property line, stopping short somewhere in the vicinity of the west face of the Gallery wing on E Street.

EXHIBIT A

c. Appendix 1 was approved.

EXHIBIT B

Old Georgetown Act

a. 1070 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W. - Four story brick office
building (O.G. 70-72) - Revised Design

The members adopted the position of accepting the Board of Architectural Consultants' recommendation for approving the design without implying the Commission's endorsement to the design. On the whole, however, it was thought to be considerable improved over the previous submission.

b. 1600 Avon Place, N.W. - New Residence (O.G. 70-74) -
Revised Design

While the design was not thought to be particularly good, the Commission approved plans on the basis that the structure would have limited effect on this particular part of Georgetown.

c. Appendix 2 was approved.

EXHIBIT C

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5. D.C. Government, Department of General Services

Brookland Elementary School, Michigan Avenue and Randolph Street,
N.E. - Revised Design

Revised design was approved.

EXHIBIT D

6. American Battle Monuments Commission

Preliminary designs for two small monuments to be erected on islands in the Pacific were viewed by the members. They recalled previous discussions of this project in which the Battle Monuments Commission's program was criticized. Their original position was reaffirmed and the designs were disapproved. A meeting with representatives of the Battle Monuments Commission was cancelled. The Secretary reported the Commission's views to the Battle Monuments Commission.

7. Treasury Department, Bureau of the Mint

a. Diplomatic Courier Service 50th Anniversary Medal - Proposed Design

Approved.

b. Medal Commemorating the Founding of Texas by Jose Antonio
Novarro - Proposed Design

Disapproved.

c. American Fisheries Society One Hundredth Anniversary Medal -
Proposed Design

Approved.

EXHIBIT E

8. Department of the Army, Office of Heraldry

Paul A. Siple Award for Achievement in Army Research - Revised
Design

Approved.

EXHIBIT F

IV. LEGISLATION

1. H.J. Res. 987 - Extending for four years the existing authority
for the erection in the District of Columbia of a Memorial to Mary McLeod
Bethune. Recommended.

EXHIBIT G

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2. Agriculture's proposed report on H.J. 13480, "To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to utilize the columns removed from the east central portico of the Capitol in an architecturally appropriate manner in the National Arboretum." Not recommended.

EXHIBIT H

3. S. 3205, "To authorize the construction of Pavilions as additions to the National Museum of History and Technology for the Smithsonian Institution, including the preparation of plans and specifications and all other work incidental thereto."

The Commission felt that it would be premature either to approve or disapprove proposed legislation without first seeing exactly what the architects have in mind. There are serious doubts about whether pavillions could be successfully attached to the base of such a "neo-classical" structure. Therefore no action was taken pending a submission of drawings whowing the actual proposal:

EXHIBIT I

V. INTERVIEWS

1. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development

American Institute of Architects Headquarters Building, New York Avenue and 18th Street, N.W. - Proposed Design

Chairman expressed the Commission's generally favorable attitude toward the new designs while other members expanded on some of the reservations they had for the treatment of the Board Room. A close harmony of value and color was urged for the exterior materials.

EXHIBIT J (copy of discussion)

2. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service
Federal Triangle, Completion of IRS, Retention of Old Post Office Tower, Grand Plaza and Parking Garage - Proposed Design.

The Commission's position of demolition of the Old Post Office Tower was reaffirmed. General approval was given for landscape treatment of the Great Plaza with the suggestion that the fountain located at the east end be larger. Copy of discussion attached. EXHIBIT K

3. National Park Service

Feasibility Study, Visitor Parking Facilities and Pedestrian Bridge Crossing, Washington Channel, between 10th Street, S.W. and Aquarium Site

Members of the Commission outlined reasons for disapproving the channel bridge and parking scheme proposed by the consultants. Copy of transcript attached.

EXHIBIT L

EXHIBIT M

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4. D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency

a. Waterfront Development, Maine Avenue, S.W., Parking Facilities

RLA officials and property developers were told of the
Commission's approval. EXHIBIT N

b. Withdrawn (Columbia Plaza Office Building).

5. D.C. Government, Department of General Services

Brookland Elementary School, Michigan Avenue and Randolph Street, N.E.

Withdrawn.

6. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development

1070 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W. - 4-Story Brick Office Building
(O.G. 70-72) - Revised Design

Withdrawn.

7. American Battle Monuments Commission

American Battle Monuments Commission Distinguished Military
Actions Commemorative Program

Withdrawn.

8. Freer Gallery of Art

Copy of action attached.

Submitted,

Charles H. Atherton

Charles H. Atherton
Secretary

12/23/2017
Jun 23, 2017

